

on the Indian Ocean side, and one about three hours south of Hawaii via airplane.

Christmas Island One +++++++

Christmas Island is part of the Republic of Kiribati, previously known as the Gilbert Islands. Independence was gained from the British in 1979. There is not much on Christmas Island to remind a visitor of the Arctic tradition of the holiday; the name's origin is a result of Captain James Cook "discovering" the island on Christmas Eve, 1777.

The island is in fact a tropical paradise, and is the largest coral atoll on the planet. The island is largely unspoiled and untouched by modern tourism, although like all undiscovered places will continue to see increasing visitors because of people like us who discover them then promote them. The island is already popular with fishermen, as bonefish fishing is reported to be the best in the world.

Escapeartist.com has an excellent page on Kiribati, with links:

<http://www.escapeartist.com/kiribati/kiribati.htm>

Christmas Island Two +++++++

The "other" Christmas Island is located in the Indian Ocean south of Indonesia. It is an Australian territory, with English being the primary language. The island is small and sparsely populated, with approximately 2,000 residents. William Mynors, a British East India Company captain, was the first European to encounter the island when he sailed past it on December 25, 1643, and of course named it after Christmas Day.

There are nice beaches, most accessible by only four wheel drive vehicles, excellent reefs, and tropical rain forests. The only industry on the island was sporadic phosphate mining until recently, when it was decided to pursue that other industry that all islands with limited resources eventually pursue:

Tourism.

Christmas Island still remains off the beaten track, but a new five star casino resort built to attract Singaporeans and others from nearby nations will help change that. Good snorkeling and scuba diving attract humans. Tourists also are discovering the annual November crab migration, when the island is almost covered with crustaceans making their way from the rain forests to the sea. Viewing this natural phenomenon becomes more popular every year, so go before the humans outnumber the crabs.

Lycos has a page, with links, on the Australian Christmas Island:

http://cityguide.lycos.com/oceania/east_pacific/CXRChristmasIsland.html

INFORMATION PRETENDING TO BE USEFUL
BUT ACTUALLY PROPAGANDA ++++++

Sale Item ++++

Our waterproof headlamp is on sale for just \$6.00:

<http://www.walkabouttravelgear.com/sale.htm>

Some Cascade Design products (PackTowl, Platypus etc.) are about to go up in price.